

Respect: A word every Wolf Pack member should value

By Lt. Col. Sean Scully
8th Medical Operations Squadron commander

Respect. That word probably sums up this message. Do you give people the respect they deserve, regardless of your biases, previous experiences and mood at any particular moment? The answer probably lies somewhere between, “Yeah, most of the time,” and “Well...I could probably do a better job.” What are the kinds of things that can cause us to be less than optimally respectful? It may depend on the situation. Are you at the gym or in the office? Are you with some friends or by yourself? How do we perceive that other person, who probably deserves respect, before any interaction even begins? Will your perception be based on how they are dressed, their physical dimensions, their color, their sex...what? Have you ever been pleasantly surprised with someone’s demonstrated performance after you had written him or her off in your mind as someone who couldn’t possibly make your A-Team? What criteria had you used initially? One of my flight doctors told me a story the other day about putting his unit softball team together at the start of the season back at base “X.” When a young female officer showed up for the first practice, the coach was a bit worried because he knew he would have to play her. Turns out she had played for one of

the top Division I college softball programs in the United States. She could play, she could really play. Their team did very well that year and the young female officer was their best all-around player. Years ago I began to develop a better understanding of my own prejudices. I realized those times when I had a less than optimal experience with someone, that I would frequently attribute that bad experience to the other person’s color, sex or ethnicity. Of course this kind of thinking is behind so much tragedy in the history of our species. Here’s the thought process: If another person did something “bad,” and that person is different from me in a particular way (religion, sex, color, nationality, political party, favorite football team, etc...), than all people different from me in that way will tend to be bad people who do bad things. How many of us guys have seen somebody do something goofy with a car and when we notice it is a female, we say “figures....lady-driver.” Well guys, here’s a news flash—women have lower insurance premiums because, on average, they present a lower risk. By now you’re probably asking what’s my point, right? Well, I’ll try to sum it up. Most people you’re going to meet in life have more in common with you than not. If you don’t believe that, pick somebody in your

work place and make a list of the differences and a list of the similarities. I think you’ll be surprised. She is more like me than I knew: I’m am not from Mars and she is not from Venus. She likes the Dallas Cowboys—so do I. She goes to the gym—so do I. She doesn’t smoke—neither do I. She’s attracted to the opposite sex—so am I. That attraction is based on her preferences—same goes for me. She wants to be taken seriously for what she can bring to the fight—yup, me too. She doesn’t want some guy, whom she has no interest in starting any kind of intimate relationship with, pursuing her all over Kunsan, and/or making her feel bad for saying “no.” While most of us guys probably haven’t had an experience like that here, we may have somewhere else and we can certainly appreciate how uncomfortable that must make someone feel. A seven letter word is the answer to our problems, R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Let’s keep that word in mind when we are interacting with each other. Our Wolf Pack mission is a serious one and we all need to feel comfortable with our fellow servicemembers to function as a fierce fighting team. God have mercy on the Wolf Pack’s prey!

Character forms essence of true heroes

By Chaplain (Col.) John Blair
Air Education and Training Command chaplain

As I reflect upon the Sept. 11 attacks on our great country, I have to ask: what intangibles do we possess to carry us through this terrible crisis? What provides us with our courage, strength, faith and resolve? What makes us who we are? The answer is our character. Character can be described in many different ways, but there is one person who brings it into focus for me: Rocky Blier. Blier was a halfback for the Pittsburgh Steelers and is a living legend. Each time he ran, a miracle unfolded before your eyes. Blier was a monument to courage and character. Football scouts tagged him as follows: “Can’t win in the NFL with this kid,” “Is not capable of playing professional football” and “I don’t think this man can make a pro club.” However, Blier was selected 417 out of 441 football players drafted in the NFL in 1968. The Steelers picked 18 players and Blier was the 18th. He was the only one of the 18 who made it in pro football. Blier was drafted into the Army that same year and later had a foot, leg and thigh severely injured during combat in the Vietnam War. He was separated from the Army with 40 percent disability. After returning from Vietnam, Blier attended the Steelers’ training camp. Despite the odds being stacked against him, due to his injured leg and time away from the game, Blier had non-physical skills working in his favor. One coach called it heart, another courage, and a third suggested character.

Character is that intangible force that retrieves shattered dreams and deflated hopes. Blier’s fortitude to persevere embodies the words of Joshua 1:9, “Be strong and of good courage; be not frightened, neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Pick the biography of any man or woman who has made a lasting contribution to humanity. Some were extremely brilliant while others were courageous. But one characteristic will be present in every case: character. Every person who achieves greatness possesses it. Character is what Dr. George Sheehan, in his book “Running and Being,” refers to when he writes, “I have character which is simply the decision to stand pain.” He further states, “Some think of character as sprinting at the end of a race, but character is what gets you there to begin with. Character starts back in the hills with six miles still to go and you are thinking of how you can get out of it without anyone noticing. Character begins when you have 40 minutes of torture left and you’re already hurting more than you ever remember.” Character is also what Sheehan calls the “wall” — the psychological breaking point that comes at the 20-mile mark of a 26-mile marathon. The wall is where the runner begins to fall apart. We have all been witnesses to many courageous acts during the past few weeks by people we can only classify as true heroes. So many displayed character and gave their lives in order to save others. I challenge you to reflect on the true greatness of our Air Force. Remember, America cannot be measured by its productivity or national resources, but only by its character. (Story courtesy of Air Force Print News)

Commander’s Hotline

The commander’s hotline is your direct line of communication between me and the Wolf Pack. It’s one of several means of helping to resolve concerns and to get my response to comments and questions. As a general rule, I ask you to contact the agency involved first, but if you are not satisfied, call the hotline at 782-5284, e-mail the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office or e-mail me directly.

– The Wolf

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